

Chapter 6

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR CORRECTIONS

The Legislature established the Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) program in 1979 to improve the hiring and training of corrections personnel working in local jails, probation departments, and juvenile halls, ranches and camps. To accomplish the program's mission, the law directed the BOC to develop statewide selection and training standards for local corrections personnel as well as a statewide training delivery system. The BOC, via its STC division, also administers a statewide subvention to assist counties and cities with the cost of meeting selection and training standards.

STC provided 1,291,302 hours of training to 28,113 local corrections personnel in FY 1998/99, and 1,142,798 total training hours to 29,083 staff in FY 1999/00. STC also accomplished the following during fiscal years 1998/99 and 1999/00:

- Disbursed over \$30.6 million to local agencies to offset training costs.
- Certified 165 entry-level training courses and 5,129 journey-level courses that assisted over 57,400 corrections personnel through 17,428 course presentations.
- Administered 43,803 written entry-level examinations to job candidates, assisting in the hiring of 9,727 local corrections employees.
 - Conducted a statewide job analysis of the local adult corrections officer position to identify core tasks performed by the majority of incumbents, and revised the entry-level curriculum accordingly.

Statewide evaluation data indicate that STC's selection criteria and job-related training curricula have had a substantial impact on local corrections, including:

- Increased job skills and professionalism;
- Reduced injuries to staff and offenders;
- Less litigation and court intervention than prior to implementation of the program; and
- Greater safety and effectiveness in operating facilities and programs.

Participation and Compliance

Participation in STC is voluntary. Local corrections agencies choosing to participate must agree to conform to the standards established by the BOC as they relate to their specific agency needs. Currently, there are 164 participating agencies (59 probation departments, 54 sheriff departments, 45 police departments that operate city jails, 3 county departments of corrections, and 3 juvenile institutions, camps and ranches). Figure Ten shows the number of local corrections staff positions participating in STC during fiscal years 1998/99 and 1999/00.

Figure Ten

PARTICIPATING STAFF BY CATEGORY

	Fiscal Year 1998/99	Fiscal Year 1999/00
Adult Corrections Officers	13,687	13,088
Probation Officers	5,055	5,408
Juvenile Corrections Officers	5,469	5,909
Supervisors	2,789	3,615
Managers	820	788
Administrators	293	275
TOTAL	28,113	29,083

Key to STC participation is an annual training plan developed by local officials after assessing hiring and training needs. STC staff monitors the progress of each participating department and meets with appropriate local officials to review, revise and update the plan. At the end of each year, the departments and STC conduct a comprehensive review of the plan's goals to determine compliance with selection and training standards and assist in future planning.

In FY 1998/99, STC found that 154 agencies were in compliance, and in FY 1999/00, 155 agencies were in compliance. This level of success is significant in light of the fiscal constraints under which local departments operated. BOC staff works with departments not in compliance to develop action plans for achieving compliance within the next fiscal year.

Funding

The Legislature created the Corrections Training Fund (CTF), which derives its revenues from court fines and penalty assessments, to provide financial assistance to counties and cities in meeting statewide selection and training standards for local corrections. The financial condition of the CTF, one of eight special funds that comprise the State Penalty Fund, directly impacts the amount of local assistance money available.

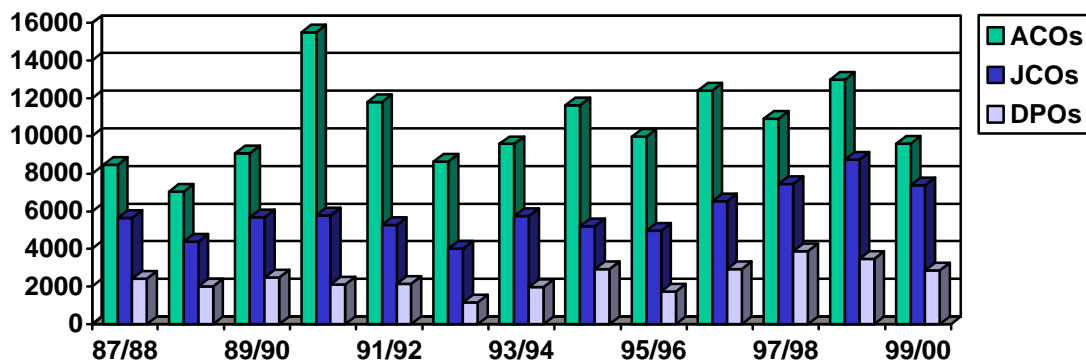
STC uses a per capita funding mechanism to ensure that available funds are fairly and equitably distributed to local agencies. In the past, declining CTF revenues resulted in a significant reduction in per capita funding available to local corrections agencies. However, the 1998/99 Budget Act included a \$6.5 million continuing augmentation to the CTF. As a result of this infusion of funds, the BOC was able to increase the per capita local assistance levels, restoring them to the 1989/90 level and covering as much as 50 percent of actual training costs incurred by local agencies. Appendix O lists training funds allocated to counties during this period; Appendix P provides the same information for cities.

Entry Level Selection and Training Standards

The BOC's selection standards for local corrections officers, probation officers and juvenile counselors include validated selection exams to measure basic abilities and characteristics for successful job performance. Figure Eleven shows statewide use of the BOC's selection exams over the past decade. In addition to the written examination, the BOC's selection criteria include: competence in oral communication as demonstrated by an interview; the ability to perform essential job functions as demonstrated by meeting the BOC's guidelines for vision, hearing, and medical screening; passing a background investigation conducted by the agency; and the successful completion of entry-level core training and an on-the-job probationary period.

Figure Eleven

LOCAL CORRECTIONS CANDIDATES TESTED BY POSITION¹



STC has also established statewide training standards for entry-level classifications. The core training curricula for these positions are based on a comprehensive, statewide job-task analysis involving incumbents, their supervisors, and subject matter experts who identified necessary job tasks and the required level of performance of those tasks. Figure Twelve shows the process by which entry-level training curricula is developed.

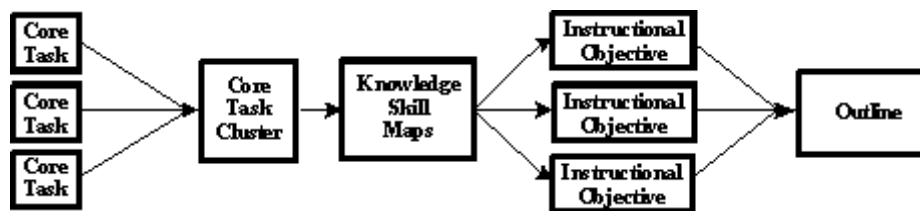
STC developed the original core curricula in 1987 and has periodically revised them to reflect changes in job tasks. To be effective, the standards must continue to be relevant and legally defensible. The BOC's revision process involves an extensive analysis of the job tasks, input from subject matter experts, and on-going evaluation and research.

¹ This chart reflects testing for Adult Corrections Officers (ACO), Juvenile Corrections Officers (JCO) and Deputy Probation Officers (DPO).

Figure Twelve

PROCESS OF CORE COURSE DESIGN

- 1) Core tasks applicable to the majority of corrections employees statewide identified through a job analysis.
- 2) Core tasks grouped into related clusters of tasks.
- 3) Groups of core tasks analyzed to determine what knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform these groups of tasks. This analysis generates what is called a “knowledge/skill” map. Each map specified the value, prerequisites, resources, principles and steps required to perform the group of tasks.
- 4) Course objectives generated from the knowledge/skill maps.
- 5) Testing specifications determined for each objective.
- 6) Course objectives arranged into units and subunits (called modules) of instruction.
- 7) Units and subunits arranged in a building block sequence of instruction.



STC Training and Delivery System

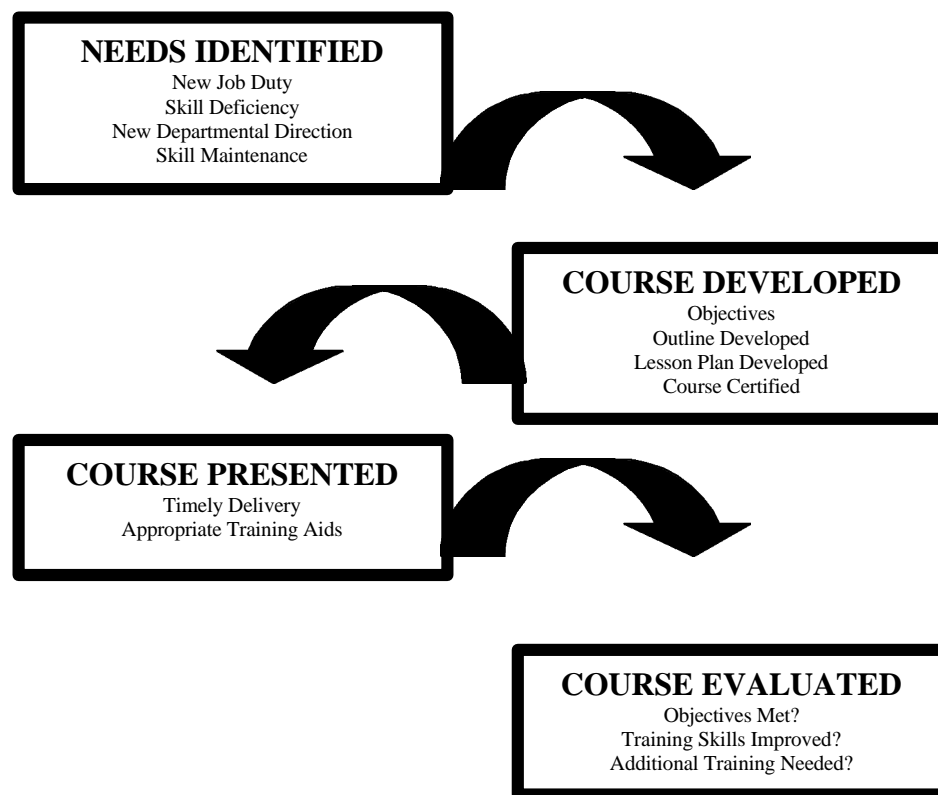
The STC training delivery system includes over 2,500 different courses each year. In fiscal years 1998/99 and 1999/00, this translated into over 17,600 course presentations by public and private entities. STC must certify all training courses before presentation. In doing so, STC reviews the course for job-relevancy, instructor qualifications, cost-effectiveness, and quality skills development. Courses fall into two categories: core courses to develop necessary skills for newly hired and/or promoted personnel, and annual courses to maintain proficiency or develop new skills for experienced personnel.

Each newly hired or promoted local corrections worker must successfully complete a core course within the first year of job assignment. The entry-level core courses for adult corrections officers, juvenile corrections counselors and probation officers cover such topics as codes and statutes, inmate classification, drug abuse, report writing, and defensive tactics. Core course training for managers, administrators and supervisors addresses such topics as information systems, communications, fiscal management, labor relations, performance appraisals and evaluations, motivation of staff, safety in the workplace and discipline procedures.

Once entry-level skills are developed through the core training curriculum, local corrections employees move on to mastery of journey-level skills through annual training, which provides in-depth coverage of topics that enhance skills and update employees on changes in their specific job assignments. This journey-level training is available through STC for all levels of corrections personnel (line staff through top management) and involves from 24 to 40 hours of annually required instruction. As illustrated in Figure Thirteen, local corrections agencies follow a systematic process for delivering annual training. This system promotes quality training in an era of limited time and resources by focusing on the most important needs. The STC division has certified more than 2,300 annual training courses, all aimed at helping local corrections operate at maximum effectiveness.

Figure Thirteen

NEEDS ASSESSMENT & TRAINING DELIVERY PROCESS



Recognizing the unique training needs which often confront local corrections agencies, the BOC offers three alternatives to STC-certified training for meeting the annual training requirement. These alternatives provide local flexibility while preserving and focusing on training integrity.

Special Certification Training addresses a unique job responsibility. Courses which may receive special certification include training for chemical agents instructors, and for personnel conducting background investigations of potential employees.

Intensified Format Training consists of short interventions that focus on one or two skills such as radio training; handcuff use; computer security; reading rap sheets; and court motions. Since this alternative

often relies on the use of internal experts, this approach allows agency administrators and training managers to identify and develop in-house instructors and subject matter experts.

Work-Related Education, Training, and Professional Development enhances an employee's overall work performance and increases the value of that employee's contribution to the organization. Examples include: post-secondary instruction leading to certification or a degree; academic courses in criminology and penology; and leadership programs.

Course Evaluation and Tracking

In addition to requiring written course evaluations from each trainee, STC conducts on-site monitoring of 5 percent of all courses annually. The purpose of on-site monitoring by STC staff is to cross reference trainee ratings against actual classroom presentations in terms of overall quality and adherence to course certification agreements. STC has computerized its major data collection operations, enabling BOC staff to: compare training courses; evaluate course relevancy; monitor program growth; determine trends in hiring and retention; maintain core job skills relevancy; and monitor cost-effectiveness of certified courses.

The Future

Proper staff selection and training will continue to be critical issues for local corrections agencies. Changes in technology, statutory and case law, professional practices, social issues and demographics drive the need to constantly update staff selection and training practices. In addition, the recent infusion of funds for the construction and expansion of local detention facilities will increase staff recruitment and training needs, particularly in the juvenile arena.

While the STC program has proven to be a low cost producer of high quality staff selection and training, the future will bring changes requiring adaptations and new directions for the program. STC has already begun redesigning program operations and training delivery in order to address such emerging trends as:

- Availability of increasingly sophisticated computer systems at lower costs;
- New databases for Requests for Certification and Annual Training Plans;
- The Internet as a means of information dissemination;
- Electronic forms management;
- E-mail;
- Computer-based training; and
- Multimedia performance-based training.

As STC adapts to these trends, the program will improve its ability to assist local agencies in achieving a high quality of staff selection and training, thereby contributing to the safe and effective operation of local detention facilities.